

REMARKS**A. Claim to Priority**

The Office Action acknowledges that a claim to priority was made by Applicant based on an application filed in France on December 5, 2002, but indicates that a certified copy of the French application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119(b) was not received. However, in Applicant's previous responses, Applicant has previously submitted a certified copy of the corresponding French application on December 4, 2003 and June 15, 2005. Applicant has further noted that the certified copy has been scanned is available on the Public PAIR system.

Applicant's undersigned representative has contacted the Examiner by telephone to confirm that the certified copy was received. During the telephone conversation, the Examiner confirmed that the certified copy of the corresponding French application had been received, and that item 2 of the Office Action of December 12, 2005 incorrectly stated that the certified copy had not been received yet.

B. Status of the Claims and Explanation of the Amendments

Prior to the submission of this paper, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 11-14 were under examination. In this paper, Applicant has added new claim 15. Support for this new claim is found throughout the specification (e.g., see original claim 4). No new matter has been added by this amendment. When claim 15 has been entered, the claims presented for examination will be claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 11-15.

Applicant has amended claims 1, 4, and 11 to correct minor typographical errors, and to conform the spellings of certain words to American English. No new matter has been added by these amendments. Applicant has also amended claims 1 and 11 to recite, *inter alia*,

“wherein the method of manufacturing...does not involve the application of paint...” Support for this amendment is found, for example, on page 2, lines 6-11 of Applicant’s specification. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 11, 12, and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Applicant's alleged "admissions" in view of JP 2000- 176659 to Hideji ("Hideji"). Claims 4 and 13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Applicant’s alleged “admissions, in view of Hideji, and in further view of US. Patent No. 5,614,338 to Pyburn et al. (“Pyburn”).

C. Applicant's Claims Are Patentable

1. Applicant’s Claims Are Patentable Over the Alleged “Admissions” In view of Hideji

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1, 2, 5, 11, 12, and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for allegedly being anticipated by Applicant’s alleged “admissions”, in view of Hideji.¹ Briefly, the combination of references fails to teach, disclose, or suggest “A method of forming a decorative motif...[that] does not involve the application of paint to said motif” as recited in Applicant’s amended independent claim 1. Similarly, the combination of references fails to teach, disclose, or suggest “A method of manufacturing a mask of a lighting or indicating apparatus for a motor vehicle... [that] does not involve the application of paint to said mask” as recited in Applicant’s amended independent claim 11.

According to the Office Action, “Applicant admits that motor manufactures [sic]

¹ As noted previously, Applicant uses the word “admissions” to be consistent with the Examiner. However, Applicant maintains that Applicant has not made these so-called “admissions” in the specification.

very often require there to be particular motifs or patterns on lighting and indicating devices...[but] does not admit that it is known to form the decorative motif on such components by metallizing said component and exposing at least one surface of the component to laser radiation.” The Office Action also has not shown that the so-called “admission” teaches to apply paint to a motif or a mask of a motor vehicle, as recited in Applicant’s independent claims 1 and 11, and corresponding dependent claims.

The Office Action further states that “Hideji teaches a method of providing motifs to a variety of transparent materials (005) by bonding a metallic foil (herein understood to read on “metallizing”) and carrying out evaporation scattering of the metallic foil with a laser marker to obtain the desired motif” [Office Action, pp. 2-3]. However, Hideji also appears to require the application of coloring paint 3 and/or protection paint film 5 (including acrylic lacquer and a 2-liquid urethane coating) after the laser process (see, e.g., the last sentence of ¶[0007], and ¶[0009] of the machine translated version of Hideji, which accompanies this response).² Hideji does not appear to teach “[a] method of forming a decorative motif...[that] does not involve the application of paint to said motif” as recited in claim 1, or “[a] method of manufacturing a mask of a lighting or indicating apparatus for a motor vehicle... [that] does not involve the application of paint to said mask” as recited in Applicant’s amended independent claim 11.

Because the combination of the “alleged admissions” and Hideji does not teach, disclose, or suggest all of the claim elements of Applicant’s claims 1, 2, 5, 11, 12, and 14, the

² Applicant has relied on the machine-translated portions of Hideji’s specification in this response. Of course, Applicant cannot vouch for the accuracy of this translation at this time, but would gladly provide a certified translation of Hideji if requested by the Examiner.

rejection of these claims should be withdrawn. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

2. Claims 4 and 13 Are Patentable Over the Cited References

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 4 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Applicant's alleged "admission", in view of Hideji and Pyburn. Briefly, there is no motivation to combine references. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn.

According to the Office Action,

Applicant's admissions in view of JP2000-176659 ...does not teach the surface of the polymer is modified with respect to color by exposure to laser radiation. However, Pyburn teaches a method of providing a graphic on a backlit component such as an illuminated display of an automobile wherein a molded plastic is exposed to laser energy to produce substantially opaque resins that form a graphic image (abstract) ...

[I]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to create the patterns on lighting and indicating devices by exposing said molded plastic to laser radiation. The motivation for doing so would have been to eliminate the use of hazardous materials such as paints and inks [Office Action, page 4].

Applicant, however, respectfully notes that Hideji uses paints not just for their ability to provide color, but also as a protective layer (see, e.g., ¶¶[0005], [0009] and Figure 5 of Hideji). Applicant does not see where Hideji teaches that its process can be performed without the use of such paint. Pyburn does not appear to teach any replacement protective layer for Hideji's protective paint, and in fact teaches away from the proposed combination by stating that Pyburn's backlit buttons "can be readily mass-produced without the use of hazardous liquid

chemistries, coatings, paints, and inks” [Pyburn, col. 2, lines 16-19]. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of Hideji, Pyburn, and the alleged “admissions” are improper and that the rejection of claims 4 and 13 should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims and allowance of this application.

AUTHORIZATION

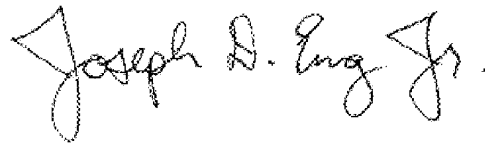
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1948-4825. A DUPLICATE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS ATTACHED.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1948-4825. A DUPLICATE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS ATTACHED.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: June 12, 2006

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